

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 SAM-01 IO-10 NIC-01 CU-02 SCCT-01

SY-04 A-01 OPR-01 OC-05 CCO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 /090 W

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R 291700Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1563

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY MADRID

DIA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 528

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MILI PO

SUBJ: MILITARY BEHAVIOR AT CDS CONGRESS

REF: LISBON 429; LISBON 465

SUMMARY: DESPITE STATEMENTS OF OPORTO MILITARY COMMANDER THAT
AT NO TIME DURING CDS CONGRESS WERE LIVES OF PARTICIPANTS AND
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OBSERVERS IN DANGER, EYE WITNESS ACCOUNTS AND RADIO BROADCASTS

BY POLICE BELIE MILITARY STATEMENT. GREAT PHYSICAL DANGER EXISTED AT ALL TIMES. FURTHERMORE BOTH POLICE AND MILITARY HAD TROUBLE CONTROLLING THEIR MEN. POLICE AND SOLDIERS MANIFESTED MUTUAL HOSTILITY, AND DIVISION AMONG DIFFERENT MILITARY UNITS ALSO APPARENT. ONLY ARRIVAL OF PROFESSIONAL ELITE PARATROOPS BROUGHT SAFETY TO THOSE BESIEGED. EVENTS AT CDS CONGRESS RAISE SERIOUS QUESTIONS CONCERNING ABILITY OF SECURITY FORCES TO HANDLE SIMILAR SITUATIONS AND WILLINGNESS OF GOP TO ALLOW LEGITIMATE PARTY TO CARRY OUT ITS ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

OPORTO MILITARY COMMAND VERSION

1. OPORTO MILITARY COMMAND HAS ISSUED COMMUNIQUE REGARDING ASSAULT ON CDS HEADQUARTERS BY MOB OF FAR LEFTISTS. COMMUNIQUE IS DEFENSIVE ATTEMPT TO ANSWER CRITICISM BY NATIONAL AND FOREIGN OBSERVERS OF POOR AND UNTIMELY SECURITY PROVIDED AT CDS CONGRESS BY POLICE AND MILITARY FORCES. THRUST OF STATEMENT IS THAT AT NO TIME WERE CONGRESS DELEGATES IN PHYSICAL DANGER. MILITARY CLAIMS IT ONLY INTERVENED AFTER CLASHES BETWEEN POLICE AND DEMONSTRATORS HAD RESULTED IN INJURY AND IN ORDER TO PREVENT WORSENING OF SITUATION AND FURTHER VIOLENCE.

2. REASON FOR LONG DELAY IN EVACUATING CDS DELEGATES AND FOREIGN OBSERVERS, ACCORDING TO STATEMENT, NECESSITATED BY (A) NEED TO GUARANTEE COMPLETE SECURITY OF AREA OUTSIDE CONGRESS SITE; (B) DESIRE BY MILITARY TO AVOID BLOODSHED IN SO DOING. OPORTO MILITARY CLAIMS IT ACCEPTED HELP OF TROOPS FROM OUTSIDE OPORTO MILITARY REGION TO DOUBLY ENSURE SAFETY OF THOSE BESIEGED, AND THAT SUCH HELP NOT FORCED ON OPORTO MILITARY COMMAND.

COPCON VERSION

3. DAO CONTACTED COPCON CHIEF OF STAFF LTCOL ARTURO BATISTA WHO TOLD DATT THAT THREE FACTORS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR FAILURE OF SECURITY AT CDS CONGRESS.
(A) OPORTO AUTHORITIES HAD UNDERESTIMATED SIZE AND TEMPER OF DEMONSTRATORS.
(B) LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDER HAD AUTHORIZED NORMAL LEAVE FOR HIS TROOPS AND HAD TO PRESS INTO GUARD DUTY COOKS, BAKERS AND OFFICE WORKERS, WHO WERE LACKING IN TRAINING OR CAPABILITY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PERFORM MISSION. IN ADDITION, LOCAL COMMANDER HAD DELAYED NOTIFYING COPCON UNTIL 11TH HOUR THAT REINFORCEMENTS WOULD BE REQUIRED.
(C) GUARD NACIONAL REPUBLICANA (GNR) WOULD HAVE BEEN CAPABLE OF RESTORING ORDER BUT THEY WERE DIRECTED TO AVOID CONFRONTATION WITH CROWD BECAUSE COPCON AND MFA ARE TRYING TO ELIMINATE IMAGE OF GNR AS RIGHTIST-ORIENTED. TO HAVE BROKEN 100 HEADS IN DEFENSE OF CDS WOULD HAVE BEEN SETBACK TO THAT GOAL.

4. COL BATISTA POINTED OUT THAT PROBLEM OF BALANCE BETWEEN POWER CENTERS IN PORTUGAL IS EXTREMELY COMPLICATED, IMPLIED THAT ONLY AFM CAN KNOW AND COPE WITH PROBLEMS OF SUCH MAGNITUDE.

ON THE SCENE OBSERVATIONS BY EMBOFF

5. STATEMENTS IN OPORTO MILITARY COMMUNIQUE DO NOT SQUARE WITH EVENTS AS SEEN BY EMBASSY OBSERVER ON SCENE. REASONS ADVANCED FOR 15 HOUR DELAY IN RESCUING TRAPPED DELEGATES AND FOREIGNERS ALSO APPEAR TO BE OTHER THAN THOSE SUGGESTED BY MILITARY. IN FACT THERE WAS THROUGHOUT LONG ORDEAL GREAT PHYSICAL DANGER TO ALL THOSE PRESENT. SECOND IN COMMAND OF OPORTO POLICE REPEATEDLY REQUESTED, BY RADIO, ASSISTANCE FROM ANY SOURCE IN ORDER TO KEEP MOB AT BAY. HE WAS OBSERVED TELLING MILITARY BY RADIO THAT POLICE UNABLE TO PREVENT SURE MASSACRE OF PERSONS INSIDE CRYSTAL PALACE GROUNDS, AND THAT SITUATION EXTREMELY SERIOUS, ESPECIALLY SINCE HIS MEN ONLY ARMED WITH PISTOLS. AT LEAST ONE ARMY DESERTER ARMED WITH G-3 AUTOMATIC RIFLE ON SIDE OF MOB ACCORDING TO POLICE CHIEF. POLICE WERE BEING FIRED UPON BY MOB ELEMENTS AND HAD NO ADEQUATE RIOT EQUIPMENT TO COUNTER-ATTACK.

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6. MILITARY POLICE UNITS ARRIVED ON SCENE ONLY WHEN GATES HAD BEEN BREACHED BY MOB AND WHEN SITUATION EXTREMELY CRITICAL. AT THAT POINT MPS TOLD POLICE TO GET BACK AND STAY AWAY, WHICH GENERATED INTENSE ANIMOSITY BETWEEN POLICE AND SOLDIERS. POLICE CONSTANTLY AND OPENLY COMPLAINED TO CDS DELEGATES AND FOREIGN OBSERVERS THAT SOLDIERS WERE WITH MOB, WERE FUTILEY TRYING TO TALK MOB INTO DISPERSING AND THAT UNLESS FORCE WERE USED (BUT NOT GUNS) ANARCHY WOULD REIGN. A NUMBER OF POLICE, INCLUDING CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMANDERS, TOLD EMBOFF THAT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS A "NEW PINOCHET" TO RESTORE ORDER IN PORTUGAL AND PREVENT ANARCHY LIKE THAT OCCURRING OUTSIDE PALACE GROUNDS.

7. MILITARY POLICE IN FACT PROVED UNABLE TO TALK MOB INTO DISPERSING. THEY WERE THEMSELVES ATTACKED WITH STONES AND FORCED TO FIRE WARNING SHOTS WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. THEY THEN REQUESTED POLICE ASSISTANCE TO REINFORCE THEIR THIN DEFENSES AT MAIN GATE TO PALACE GROUNDS, WHILE REQUESTING COPCON REINFORCMENTS. POLICE AT THIS POINT REFUSED TO OBEY ORDERS OF THEIR COMMANDER, AND GRUMBLED THAT THEY WERE FED UP TAKING ALL CASUALTIES. ONLY AFTER REPEATED DIRECT ORDERS DID SOME OF THOSE POLICE PRESENT PUT ON HELMETS AND TAKE UP DEFENSIVE POSITIONS.

8. ANIMOSITY BETWEEN SOLDIERS AND CDS DELEGATES, AS WELL AS WITH POLICE GREW DURING NIGHT. MPS REINFORCED LATER IN EVENING BY DRAFTEES FROM OUTLYING TOWNS WHOSE SYMPATHIES TOWARDS DEMONSTRATORS NOT HIDDEN FROM ANYONE. THEY SEEN GIVING FOOD TO MOB AND CHANTING REVOLUTIONARY SLOGANS ALONG WITH DEMONSTRATORS. MANY TROOPS OBSERVED DRINKING BEER. HEATED ARGUMENTS ENSUED BETWEEN TROOPS AND POLICE, RESULTING IN ORDER BY POLICE COMMANDER FOR HIS MEN TO STAY AWAY FROM SOLDIERS.

9. ARRIVAL OF REPUBLICAN NATIONAL GUARD (GNR) SOME NINE HOURS INTO DEMONSTRATION FURTHER HEATED UP SITUATION. GNR CAVALRY AND ARMORED VEHICLES ATTEMPTED TO SWEEP MOB FROM SCENE

BY CHARGE. AFTER ONE SWEEP THROUGH AREA IN WHICH HEAVY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE DIRECTED IN AIR, GNR WAS ORDERED TO RETURN TO BARRACKS BY MAJOR COMMANDING TROOPS. SIXTH CAVALRY UNITS AND EIGHTH INFANTRY REGIMENTS SOLDIERS ALSO ORDERED FROM SCENE BY TROOP COMMANDER, WHO TOLD CDS LEADERS THAT HE ANXIOUS TO KEEP OTHER UNITS AWAY OUT OF FEAR THAT A CONFRONTATION MIGHT OCCUR BETWEEN ARMY UNITS. HE ALSO SAID HE UNSURE THAT HIS RECRUITS WOULD OBEY HIS ORDERS, AT WHICH POINT HE ORDERED ALL THOSE ON GROUNDS OUTSIDE PALACE INSIDE.

10. MAIN ISSUE DIVIDING TROOPS AND POLICE WAS USE OF FORCE TO END SIEGE. DRAFTEES STATED OPENLY TO CDS AND OBSERVERS THAT THEY UNWILLING TO USE ANY FORCE AGAINST CROWD, WITH WHOM THEY IN SYMPATHY. HENCE IMPASSE WHICH RESULTED FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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SO MANY HOURS. ONLY ARRIVAL OF DISCIPLINED PARATROOP UNITS FROM TANCOS BROKE DEADLOCK AND ALLOWED SAFE EXIT OF THOSE TRAPPED. HAD IMPASSE CONTINUED INTO DAYLIGHT HOURS OF JANUARY 26 GENERAL FEELING WAS THAT MOB WOULD HAVE RETURNED IN FORCE AND MADE SAFE EXIT IMPOSSIBLE.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

11. EMBASSY HAS ALSO RECEIVED CREDIBLE REPORTS OF SPLIT BETWEEN OPORTO ARMY DEPUTY COMMANDER AND COMMANDER, WITH FORMER, AN AFM MEMBER, ALLEGED TO HAVE PUT COMMANDER UNDER HOUSE ARREST AND PREVENTED COMMANDER FROM CARRYING OUT PLAN FOR WORKABLE SECURITY MEASURES AT CDS CONFERENCE. IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL REPORTS OF ASSISTANCE BEING PROVIDED TO DEMONSTRATORS BY MEMBERS OF ARMY MACHINE GUN REGIMENT LOCATED NEXT TO CRYSTAL PALACE.

12. COMMENT: BEHAVIOR OF GOVERNMENT AND SECURITY FORCES AT CDS AFFAIR RAISE SEVERAL IMPORTANT QUESTIONS --ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THREE DEMONSTRATIONS SCHEDULED FOR JAN 31 IN LISBON (SEPTEL).
(A) WHY DID GOP ALLOW DEMONSTRATION TO TAKE PLACE WHEN IT WAS PLAIN THAT CONFRONTATION OF NOV 74 TYPE WOULD BE LIKELY RESULT? PARTICIPANTS IN DEMONSTRATION, DURING COURSE OF PREVIOUS WEEK, HAD MADE THEIR INTENTIONS TO BREAK UP CONGRESS AMPLY CLEAR. IT IS DIFFICULT NOT TO BELIEVE THAT GOP, AND ESPECIALLY LEFTISTS IN AFM, GIVEN THEIR GREAT LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR CDS AND FEAR THAT CDS WILL HAVE STRENGTH TO LEAD CONSERVATIVE OR "REACTIONARY" FORCES IN UNDOING AFM PROGRAM, DELIBERATELY STOOD ASIDE AND ALLOWED FORCIBLE DISSOLUTION OF CONGRESS.
(B) EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS QUESTION OF DISCIPLINE WITHIN ARMY UNITS AND EXTENT WHICH ARMY CAN BE EXPECTED TO CARRY OUT ORDERS FROM LISBON AND FROM ITS UNIT COMMANDERS. WE HAVE CONSIDERABLE DOUBT ABOUT RELIABILITY OF ARMY TROOPS (EXCEPT ELITE UNITS LIKE PARATROOPS) IN FACE OF LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS.

MOST INDICATIONS ARE THAT ORDINARY TROOPS CANNOT BE COUNTED ON TO DEAL WITH CROWDS EFFECTIVELY AND EXPECIALLY WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO FIRE ON DEMONSTRATORS.

(C) CDS INCIDENT ALSO CONFIRMS OUR VIEW OF TENSIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT TROOP UNITS AND BETWEEN LEFTIST AND MODERATE ELEMENTS WITHIN ARMY.

(D) THIS INCIDENT PUTS IN DOUBT ABILITY OF ARMY, PARAMILITARY
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GNR, AND SECURITY POLICE TO WORK TOGETHER. ARMY STILL SUSPECTS THAT GNR AND PSP NEVER ACCEPTED APRIL 25 REVOLUTION AND LONG FOR GOOD OLD DAYS. GNR AND PSP IN TURN FEEL THAT ARMY WILL NOT ALLOW THEM TO DO THEIR JOB OR EVEN TO PROPERLY DEFEND THEM-SELVES.

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